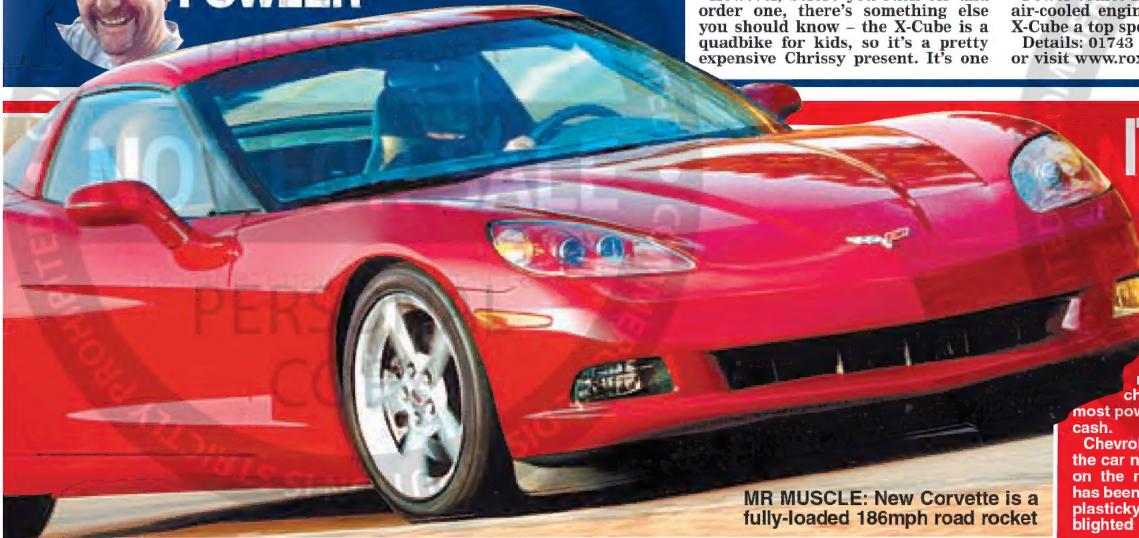


## With GEORGE FOWLER



MR MUSCLE: New Corvette is a fully-loaded 186mph road rocket

ISN'T this wonderful. It's called The Roxon X-Cube (right) and it's all yours this Christmas for £1,599.

However, before you rush off and order one, there's something else you should know - the X-Cube is a quadbike for kids, so it's a pretty expensive Chrissy present. It's one

of a stack of Italian styled off-road motorcycles and quads for youngsters being marketed by Masco.

Power comes from a 50cc 2-stroke air-cooled engine, which gives the X-Cube a top speed of 40mph.

Details: 01743 761107 or visit [www.roxon.co.uk](http://www.roxon.co.uk)



## IT'S A COR-VETTE

IF there's one thing the Chevrolet Corvette has always been, it's big, stupidly quick to the point of terrifying, horribly thirsty, and an absolute bargain. Well, a new one goes on sale in January and, as far as I can make out, nothing much has changed ... it's still the most power you can get for your cash.

Chevrolet claim to have made the car not so harsh and violent on the road, while the interior has been smartened-up from the plasticky American affair that blighted previous models, and

the gearbox has been upgraded to a slick six-speed.

Power from the Corvette's massive 6.0-litre V8 remains at 400bhp, coupled to 400lbs of torque, resulting in a top speed of 186mph and 0-60mph in a shattering 4.1secs.

### Value

Chevvy claim an average 24.2mpg, and note that I use the word "claim" because you'd have to drive it like the boat was full of touch-sensitive bombs.

At £41,000 the Corvette is astonishing value ... if you live in mainland Europe. Sadly, latest models are still left-hand-drive, and there are no plans for right-handers. What a shame.



## FACTFILE

**BMW 116i SE.**  
PRICE (on the road): £17,640. (range: £15,690 - £20,800).

**ENGINE:** 1,596cc, all-alloy, 16-valve, DOHC, with variable valve timing (115bhp, 114lb torque).

**TOP SPEED:** 125mph; 0-62mph: 10.8secs.

**MPG:** Urban: 26.9; extra urban: 47.9; combined: 37.7.

**CO<sub>2</sub>:** 181g/km.

**INS GROUP:** 10.

just 115bhp, may not sound a lot these days, but you'd be surprised how quick this car is, especially once you get it moving.

You see, it's good for 125mph, which means there's stacks of mid-range pull, coupled to an excellent fuel-figure of 38mpg.

The handling, with rear-wheel-drive, is outrageous. It sticks to the road like a guard dog to your wrist, while you just get quicker and quicker.

Of course, being a BMW, it's quiet with it too, so you really have to keep an eye on the speedo.

### Heavy

Yep, this is one great car. But unfortunately, it's inherited BMW down-sides that won't impress the people it's aimed at ... women.

And that's because the clutch is classic BMW. It's heavy and takes a lot of effort.

The steering, while parking, is just not light enough and girls will get fed-up with hauling it about. And the doors ... those damned BMW doors.

They almost smash back into your face as you struggle to push them wide open.

After a week I got used to it, but there again I'm a man.

And if any of you saw me driving the 1 Series around, I repeat, I'm a bloke.

Okay?

## IMAGE RATING

HERE'S how the BMW 116i SE fares image-wise.

**REAR MIRROR MONSTER:** Hugely impressive. Looks like a really mean machine thanks to swept-back window, big triple-bulb headlights and classic BMW grille.

**BACKSIDE BEAUTY:** Oh dear. Suddenly it looks small, and low to the ground. Pretty, it ain't.

**PLAYTIME PLEASER:** Gadgets galore. CD-stereo with steering wheel controls, twin zone climate control, rear parking warning system and a trip computer top the list.

**NAUGHTY NIGGLES:** Useless glove box. Safety belt doesn't adjust up and down over your shoulder, like most new cars, making it uncomfortable.

**TASTY TOUCHES:** Decent boot. Fully-adjustable steering wheel. Reasonable rear leg-room.

**FAST OR LAST:** Neither quick, nor slow, but fantastic handling coupled to an astonishing high-speed cruiser for only a 1.6-litre motor.

**WONGA WONDER:** Brilliant value. It may be small but it's a proper Beemer at an affordable price.

**WOULD AN ESSEX GIRL LIKE IT?** What a pose. Tracey would love being seen in it. And she'd like the car too.

LOOKING for something to do this weekend? Then get yourselves down to London's ExCeL Centre, in Docklands, for the mind-blowing Max Power show, which runs tomorrow and on Sunday. You'll see top modified motors, including the world's five best customized cars from Japan, Australia, Spain and the US. There's also the ICE village, home to the largest and loudest in-car

entertainment systems in the UK, a live action arena, featuring top stunt drivers Terry Grant and Russ Swift, while Swedish supermodel Victoria Silvstedt, along with Daily Star favourites Lucy Pinder, Michelle Marsh and Jodie Marsh will be meeting fans and signing autographs. The show is open from 9.00am to 06.00pm on both days. Tickets are £24 and can be bought on entry.

## BE A CUT-PRICE RODEO RIDER...

ISUZU have slashed the price of award-winning pick-up the Rodeo, meaning that a 2.5-litre diesel single-cab now starts at £8,995 (exc VAT), which gives a huge saving of £2,362.

The massive and superbly equipped double-cab (pictured) has gone down by £2,562 to £9,495, which is highly tempting for a motor that has been named best pick-up of the year by What Van? mag.

Personally, I just love that name: The Rodeo - driven by cowboys. Or should that be builders?



## GIVE US A STEER

SIX years ago I bought a car from a reputable dealer. I recently decided to trade it in, only to be told my car was a Category D write-off, and was only worth half its value. What does Category D mean, is the car really worth so much less, and can I legally sell it privately?

Category D's are cars that are uneconomical for the insurance company to repair; but haven't sustained enough damage to be scrapped - so they can be repaired. They can also be cars that have been replaced under "new-for-old" insurance replacement schemes.

You don't have to tell the potential buyers that it's a Cat-D, but if you're

## PARKER'S CAR GUIDES

Your motoring questions answered by the experts [www.parkers.co.uk](http://www.parkers.co.uk)

What's the correct procedure for driving through floodwater?

A Don't drive through water that looks too deep - better to turn back than be stranded. If the water is more than a few inches drive slowly in first gear and keep the revs up. And try to stick to the middle of the road, where the water is usually shallower.

Golf and Audi. And if you can afford the extra for the SE, it's good value. For £1,950 you get flash 16-inch, seven-spoke, alloys, climate control with separate driver and passenger settings, leather steering wheel with phone, computer and radio controls.

*And that's just for starters.*

There's also a rear parking warning system, rear-view mirror which dims automatically, fog lights, a folding arm-rest which contains a storage box and even blue lights that glow under the door handles in the dark.

Told you it was flash. And that's a lot extras for the cash.

So what's the drive like? Well, it's 1.6-litre motor, pushing out

# MOTOR MOUTH

**EXTRA**

Edited by  
**GEORGE FOWLER**

**IT MAZDA BE YOU:** Due in September, the Mazda 6 MPS is a leather-clad rocket



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# ZOOM ZOOM BOOM BOOM

**WELL boil me for 10 minutes, stick some raw fish on my head and call me sushi.**

Hungry for more success, Mazda is serving up some tasty Japanese offerings to bring to the motoring banquet in the next few months.

The first course is the Mazda6 MPS - meaning Mazda Performance System.

They wanted to call it the Mazda6 "Speed", but that would have gone down with our safety authorities like a Wayne Rooney personal appearance at an Emlyn Hughes tribute dinner.

#### Taste

Last week I was one of the world's first journalists to get a taste of the Mazda6 MPS at a race track near Osaka, Japan.

With a 2.3-litre, direct injection, turbocharged engine, six gears and four-wheel drive, this car rocks.

Thrashing it round the twists and turns of a former F1 track may not be the ideal way to gauge how it handles on motorways - but it shows how it sticks to the road - and that's

**From BILL IZZARD,  
in Hiroshima, Japan**

like glue. Also there is no trace of turbo lag when you hit the pedal. It zooms to 60mph in just over six seconds and climbs up to around 150mph.

Inside, the car is all leather, knobs and buttons, and feels sporty and comfortable.

The price hasn't been released yet, but expect about £26,000 when it hits our showrooms next September.

**Right, clear the starters, here comes the main course, in the shape of a new Mazda MX5 and a concept version of a sports wagon.**

Unfortunately news on these two delicacies - both of which I have seen - I'm not allowed to give you on pain of death.

But I can tell you the new MX5 will be unveiled early next year at the Geneva Motor Show.

But it doesn't take too much working out that it will be much the same as the world-beating original - only better.

I can also tell you that the other new car, the concept wagon, looks fantastic.

It will be unveiled at the Detroit

Motor Show next month. Now, I usually blow my nose at concept cars because it normally means: "Here is a car that looks brilliant - that we can't afford to build."

I mean, I have this concept where I cover Kylie in marmalade and have her on toast for breakfast, but I can't see it happening.

But I do hope this Mazda concept sees the light of day, and when you see it soon I bet you agree.

Like a Japanese dinner, the Mazda courses keep coming, and the Ford-backed firm hopes to gobble up a slice of the people carrier market with the Mazda 5.

From what I can see this will be a sector-leading motor because the three banks of seats you get are simple to access and rearrange.

#### Gentle

I remember testing a Ford Galaxy and you needed to be a weightlifter to get the seats to move into position.

In the Mazda 5, gentle pulls and pushes do the job.

Finally on the menu is the Mazda RX8, the increasingly popular rotary engined sports car.

Not a launch this time, but Mazda has served up an improved rotary system, giving better performance to weight ratio and better fuel economy, while for the future, Mazda is working on a hydrogen fuel-cell version.

I hear that the RX8 has been so successful that the legendary RX7 may get a new lease of life.

**It seems Mazda's zoom zoom, is about to become boom boom.**

## FACTFILE

**Mazda6 MPS.**  
**PRICE (on the road):** £26,000 (approx).  
**ENGINE:** 2.3-litre

direct injection  
turbo with six-speed box and four-wheel-drive (274bhp).

**TOP SPEED:**  
147mph; 0-60 mph: 6.6secs.  
**ON SALE:** September.

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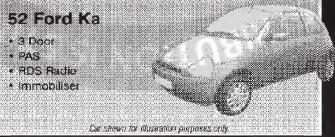
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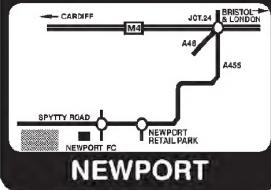
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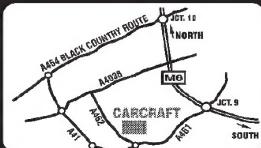
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## joke bloke

Text DSJOKE (space) name and joke to 61616



TWO eskimos are sitting in a kayak, both feeling the cold. So they light a fire in the boat - which caught fire and sank. Proving once and for all that you can't have your kayak and heat it.

"BBCBULLS",  
Leeds.

THREE shipwrecked men find themselves on a desert island and decide to cut cards to see who does all the cooking.

The other two agree that they'll only take over the job if both of them complain.

There's only coconuts on the island and after three weeks the cook is heartily sick of his task.

So he collects up some animal droppings and makes a stew out of them instead.

He serves it up to the other two, who take a mouthful and

- WE pay £5 for each joke printed. Write to: Joke Bloke, Daily Star, 10 Lower Thames Street, London EC3R 6EN

spit it out. One says: "God, that's sh\*t! Mind you, it's been perfectly cooked!"

R. SARGENT,  
Wolverhampton.

*Joke by text...*

THREE blondes were out walking and found some tracks on the ground. First one said: "Oh, they're rabbit tracks." Second blonde said: "No, they're deer tracks." Third one said: "Don't be silly - they're bear tracks."

They were still arguing 10 minutes later when the train hit them. CHRIS ANDERSON, Ayr.

Listen and laugh as your mate is wound up on 0905 235 8158  
Calls cost £1 per minute.

## TEXT MANIACS TEXT DSTAR TO 61616

Bush wins 2nd term thru fear of terrorism now his poodle tries the same trick. **Jeff Mc**  
 it is now 12 weeks since the criminal records bureau starting dealing with my non-existent criminal record. Keep up the good work eh? im in no hurry 2 start work. **freddie, n.east**  
 smoke, binge drink, tec drugs, f\*\*\* the government! **Barnsley Boy**  
 news flash to non smokers: you will all die one day too! **a.g., aberdeen**  
 david blunkett was supposed 2 b on i'm a celeb but he cudnt find his passport. **Ronnie Random, Rhyl**  
 just turned celeb off will not b watchin again! Vic? might as well bring all the families in! **Pam & Mike**  
 get helium-filled joe pasquale out of the jungle, his voice is higher than a dog whistle, he talks n JSP barks. **skinny fitter**  
 tara palmer-tomkinson is 32 - is that age or cup size? **mal**  
 What is para-t-on in Im a celeb? Get her out of there! Cringe tv or wot? **CAROLE**  
 Im fed up with folk moaning about reality T shows, u dont have 2 watch them. some of us like them. hit the off button, dont moan. **Dave in Wakey**  
 yo ash - bb's victor is in the paper again for being a TT, bet u wish u neva texted yesterday! **DODGE**  
 THE TRISHA SHOW FULL OF TRAILER TRASH, MAKES JERRY SPRINGER LOOK CLASSY D. FITZ  
 Most revolting thing i've ever seen is Ricky Tomlinson. If i see this slob on Tv i am physically sick. **Masher**  
 WELL DONE BBC 4 BRINGING BACK THE BIG YIN. THE MANS A LEGEND. **JIMMY HILLS CHIN**



any chance of a sexy pic of melinda messenger? we havent seen her 4 a while. **KEV, SCOTLAND**

Does any1 know where Mr Benn used 2 live? **MARK & STUARTY**  
 AN HOUR OF EASTENDERS ON CHRISTMAS DAY! I DEMAND A REFUND ON BBC TV TAX. **TC**

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# Justin Toper

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IF TODAY IS YOUR BIRTHDAY: Your love for someone is as strong as ever, and their presence will shape your life. What's more, your confidence will go through the roof this year.  
CELEBRATING TODAY: Singer Tina Turner, 65.

## Aries

(Mar 21–Apr 20)

WHATEVER happens, your freedom cannot be denied. All you have to do is follow your heart. Also, there is no doubt that somebody is about to declare their allegiance, and you may have to go boldly where you have never been before. To see why you need to proceed at a relaxed pace, call...

To receive daily texts send DSARI to 63333 0905 072 0099 (01) \*

## Taurus

(Apr 21–May 21)

YOU may have been about to enter discussions, but you would probably have regretted committing yourself to something that might never pay off. The likelihood is that a deal will exceed all your expectations next week. To see why your heart is ruling your head, call...

To receive daily texts send DSTAU to 63333 0905 072 0099 (02) \*

## Gemini

(May 22–June 22)

YOU still have a high regard for someone, even though they have behaved strangely. True, there may be another encounter shortly. Moreover, how do you get yourself into these situations? But, in this instance, you should be enthralled. To see why you should be able to resolve past issues, call...

To receive daily texts send DSGEM to 63333 0905 072 0099 (03) \*

## Cancer

(June 23–July 23)

YOU should be able to pick up the pieces and act as though nothing has happened. What occurred earlier this week may have been coincidental, but trust your heart and you may be surprised by the ability of others to deliver. To see how you could improve things, call...

To receive daily texts send DSCAN to 63333 0905 072 0099 (04) \*

## Leo

(July 24–Aug 23)

TRUE, you may believe in somebody with every fibre of your body. But you must admit that your faith has been misplaced or you feel you've been duped. Fortunately, what you receive in compensation will more than make up for it. To see why you can refuse anything, but not love, call...

To receive daily texts send DSLEO to 63333 0905 072 0099 (05) \*

## Virgo

(Aug 24–Sep 23)

THERE a conflict of interests, which probably explains why you are trying to dodge people. But, no doubt what is decided next week is workable. In the meantime, you can count on a friend to arrange something beneficial. To see why you mustn't reject someone, call...

To receive daily texts send DSVIR to 63333 0905 072 0099 (06) \*

## Libra

(Sep 24–Oct 23)

MAYBE what you have to do requires a lot of effort, but there are steps you can take to make things easy. Also, expect some rather optimistic encounters. True, others may find your actions bewildering. But you are about to realise an unfulfilled wish. To see why you should be positive, call...

To receive daily texts send DSLIB to 63333 0905 072 0099 (07) \*

## Scorpio

(Oct 24–Nov 22)

YOU are not in a position to complain, particularly when someone else pays the bills or makes the money. Even if there are personal issues to be addressed, once an agreement is signed, you won't have to be so frugal. To see why your anxieties will go away, call...

To receive daily texts send DSSCO to 63333 0905 072 0099 (08) \*

## Sagittarius

(Nov 23–Dec 21)

YOU are more frivolous and flirtatious than usual. Except that a domestic issue came to a head this week, and you may be feeling a bit sad. Even so, you are now bound to have fun when you are out and about. To see why this has to be a time of amazing encounters, call...

To receive daily texts send DSSAG to 63333 0905 072 0099 (09) \*

## Capricorn

(Dec 22–Jan 20)

EVERYTHING has happened so fast little makes sense, but you are intrigued. Also, it will be interesting to see what occurs when someone gets back to you. However, keeping tabs on people may not be easy. To see why all your efforts have not been wasted, call...

To receive daily texts send DSCAP to 63333 0905 072 0099 (10) \*

## Aquarius

(Jan 21–Feb 19)

YOU may have quite a large circle of friends and business acquaintances. But after what took place recently, you are going to have to be more choosy or discerning. Also agree how and when you are going to get paid in future. To see why life should be less turbulent, call...

To receive daily texts send DSAQU to 63333 0905 072 0099 (11) \*

## Pisces

(Feb 20–Mar 20)

YOUR behaviour has had an inflammatory effect, and those at the top don't know whether to trust you. But you won't be punished and what has happened could pave the way for negotiations. To see why the best solution might not be the obvious one, call...

To receive daily texts send DSPIS to 63333 0905 072 0099 (12) \*

\*When you telephone to hear Justin's weekly in-depth forecast, you will be asked to dial your special Zodiac Number. This is the number in brackets next to the general number under each of the star signs.

Calls to 0906 664 0909. Lines open 8am-9pm. All calls are recorded. Message 0871 200 0022. ALL LINE, PD 0843 211 0112.

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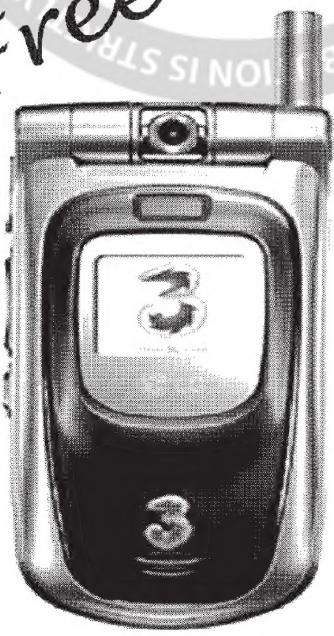
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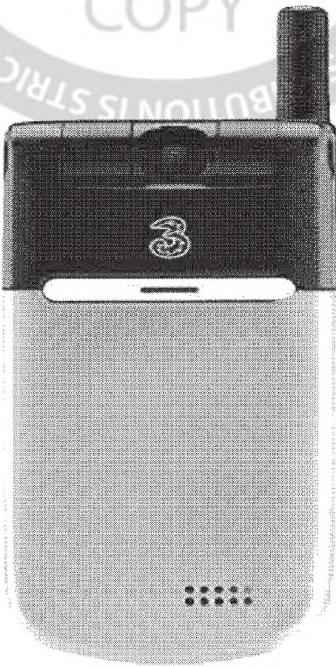
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# RON'S A FRIDAY SPECIAL

IT'S Friday, it's a 225m race, it's Romford – it must mean an appearance of Ronnies Boss – and how right you are!

If only things in life were as simple, but profiting from Linda Jones' dog at the weekly Essex track meets has been plain-sailing, and tonight should be no exception as he goes for his seventh consecutive C&D win and 13th in total.

As sure as eggs are eggs, Ronnies Boss dons his favoured striped jacket as the sole wide seed and, while the odds on offer will not be great, it should simply be a case of putting the cash down and picking it up with a decent interest return for just a 13-odd second deposit.

Local favourite Ninja Lark pulled victory from the jaws of defeat with a tenacious effort last week and he will be many people's idea of a

## WIMBLEDON TIPS

7.30 MOYNE BRIDGE (3)	Four Winds (6)
7.45 CHURCHROCK BOSS (nap) (3)	Windgap Molly (5)
8.00 REIDY BLASTER (5)	Oliver Polver (4)
8.15 ROCKMOUNT ZETA (1)	Cloneys Black (2)
8.30 HANKS WISH (nb) (5)	Rich N Pretty (6)
8.45 BOBS MEMORY (1)	Din Ops (5)
9.00 LACEY LADY (1)	Lilywhite Mo (2)
9.15 MAGS MAGIC (2)	Disturbance (1)
9.30 DASH OF SPEED (3)	Vanilla Fudge (5)
9.45 LOVABLE LINDSEY (3)	Cool Poly (2)
10.00 TALLY RIVER (1)	Ardra Amy (2)
10.15 FOXCOVER LEGEND (2)	Doneganire (6)
10.30 ARBOUR JACK (5)	Big Showoff (2)

Slotted in the 'pinging' three-box, Patsy Cusack's dog has plenty going for him and a 24.30sec C&D win last month strongly suggests that if he gets first run or even a handy pitch without hassle early, he will take some beating.

**Alamshar** (10.24), who formed part of Derby-winning trainer Ian Reilly's raiding squad for the premier Classic in the summer, has clearly had his problems, but looked something like his old self when making all over 575m here last week. A repeat performance looks very much on the cards.

Local runners have a tendency to dominate here and tonight should go with the grain with Young expected to notch a double courtesy of

## Hassle

banker in the finale, but there could be value in opposing Paul Young's dog in what is a more competitive race than it first seems.

Fellow local Low Breeze possesses decent toe into the corner and looks a hazard to Ninja Lark to the extent that the pair could well come together on the dash to the corner.

**Flame Of Hope** (10.40) revealed two aspects of his game during the London Scatty at the Racing Post Festival. The first of those was fairly obvious in that he possesses plenty of ability, but the second, and just as crucial for tonight, that he was desperate for a middle draw.

Locally-based Ninja Lark pulled victory from the jaws of defeat with a tenacious effort last week and he will be many people's idea of a

## YOUR AFTERNOON BAGS CARDS WITH BEST HINTS

### WIMBLEDON

11.25 Blue Star (A5)	450m
5242 Denevire Bell (nb) (5)	28.55
5239 Kewell Wonder (sa) (5)	28.55
5311 BONVILLE FRED (ep) (5)	28.45
4316 Molly Mana (sp) (5)	28.55
5 1665 Juveline Dream (fw)	28.55
5 1492 Moxie (nb) (5)	28.55
1.05 Blue Star (A5)	450m
Denevire Bell, Juveline Dream, 9-2 Madam Boss, Molly Mana	
5 1501 Coming Soon (nb) (5)	28.95
5 1502 Baby Boy (nb) (5)	28.95
5 1503 Recruit Rumble (nb) (5)	28.95
5 1504 Aglist JDC (nb) (5)	28.78
5 1221 Back To Martin (nb) (5)	28.50
5 1532 Madam Skippy (sa) (5)	28.50
5 1533 Baby Boy (nb) (5)	28.08
5 2236 Molly Kay (nb) (5)	28.98
Star betting: 5-2 Aglist JDC, 7-2 Back To Martin, Molly Kay, 4 Blue Bata, 5 Takin' Luck, 5 Madam Skippy.	
11.41 (A5)	450m
5 1493 Blue Star (nb) (5)	28.78
5 2353 AGLIST JDC (nb) (5)	28.78
5 2421 Back To Martin (nb) (5)	28.50
5 1532 Madam Skippy (sa) (5)	28.50
5 1534 Baby Boy (nb) (5)	28.08
5 2236 Molly Kay (nb) (5)	28.98
Star betting: 3 Exchange Roll, 7-2 Benraw Boy, Nickey Koi, 4 Recruit Rumble, 9-2 Stable Sonja, 5 1534 Baby Boy, 5 1532 Madam Skippy, 5 1533 Baby Boy, 5 1531 Coming Soon, 5 1502 Baby Boy, 5 1503 Recruit Rumble, 5 1501 Coming Soon, 5 1502 Baby Boy, 5 1503 Recruit Rumble, 5 1504 Aglist JDC, 5 1505 Baby Boy, 5 1506 Baby Boy, 5 1507 Baby Boy, 5 1508 Baby Boy, 5 1509 Baby Boy, 5 1510 Baby Boy, 5 1511 Baby Boy, 5 1512 Baby Boy, 5 1513 Baby Boy, 5 1514 Baby Boy, 5 1515 Baby Boy, 5 1516 Baby Boy, 5 1517 Baby Boy, 5 1518 Baby Boy, 5 1519 Baby Boy, 5 1520 Baby Boy, 5 1521 Baby Boy, 5 1522 Baby Boy, 5 1523 Baby Boy, 5 1524 Baby Boy, 5 1525 Baby Boy, 5 1526 Baby Boy, 5 1527 Baby Boy, 5 1528 Baby Boy, 5 1529 Baby Boy, 5 1530 Baby Boy, 5 1531 Baby Boy, 5 1532 Baby Boy, 5 1533 Baby Boy, 5 1534 Baby Boy, 5 1535 Baby Boy, 5 1536 Baby Boy, 5 1537 Baby Boy, 5 1538 Baby Boy, 5 1539 Baby Boy, 5 1540 Baby Boy, 5 1541 Baby Boy, 5 1542 Baby Boy, 5 1543 Baby Boy, 5 1544 Baby Boy, 5 1545 Baby Boy, 5 1546 Baby 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ACTION MAN: Lewis Moody takes the game to Canada

# Moody's now all smiles

LEWIS MOODY has targeted tomorrow's clash with Australia as the perfect chance to bring out the best in him.

The England flanker reckons the public are yet to see what he is truly made of after being sidelined with a foot injury for most of the 12 months since the World Cup final.

The break made Moody realise just how much he missed playing rugby.

And after struggling back to full fitness following his lengthy lay-off, Moody is now desperate to make the most of his "second chance" and show the English public just how much more he has to give. Moody said: "Rugby means so much more to me now I've got almost a second chance at my career."

"I've always enjoyed the game and it has been good to me - but it means a hell of a lot to be out there on the pitch again."

## Speed

"When you're not involved, you realise how much you miss it and it's then a case of striving to get back in - and once you are there, taking your chance."

"I've spent nearly 11 months on the sidelines - now I'm getting back to the way I was and doing the kind of things that I used to do on the pitch."

"The public really haven't seen the best of me yet, I feel there is a lot more to give."

"Certainly in terms of speed and leg work, I am improving all the time."

"I am still searching for that perfect game and although it may never happen, I've got to look for it."

# IT'S HI, NOON

ENGLAND have called up Newcastle centre Jamie Noon as cover for Mike Tindall ahead of tomorrow's Twickenham clash with Australia.

The England vice-captain is suffering from a stomach bug and although he should be fit to take his place in England's midfield, Noon has linked up with the rest of the squad at their Surrey training base as a precaution.

If Tindall is ruled out, then 54-cap Will Greenwood can expect promotion off the bench to the starting XV, with Noon joining England's replacements.

Newcastle boss Rob Andrew has named Noon in the Falcons side for Sunday's Zurich Premiership game against Northampton.

# Union chief blasts players' treatment

# BEVO: WE'RE PAWN STARS



**THE England team hit out at cricket bosses last night and claimed they had been used as "political pawns" in the row over Zimbabwe.**

Zimbabwe's government performed a spectacular U-turn yesterday to ensure the controversial one-day series will go ahead although today's scheduled opener has been abandoned.

Zimbabwe lifted that ban at lunchtime yesterday and effectively removed any reason for England to withdraw from the tour without facing sanctions from the ICC.

**But Bevan and the players were still "extremely disappointed" with the way the issue had been handled.**

England will fly to Harare today from Johannesburg still uneasy about playing cricket in a coun-

## from RODNEY WHITE

Cricketers' Association chief executive Richard Bevan to criticise senior officials for allowing players to be drawn into the dispute once again, after the tour was put in doubt by the Zimbabwe government banning several British reporters.

Zimbabwe lifted that ban at lunchtime yesterday and effectively removed any reason for England to withdraw from the tour without facing sanctions from the ICC.

**But Bevan and the players were still "extremely disappointed" with the way the issue had been handled.**

England will fly to Harare today from Johannesburg still uneasy about playing cricket in a coun-

try run by the bloody regime of dictator Robert Mugabe.

"From the players' perspective, the last 24 hours have been extremely disappointing and saddened the players for a number of reasons," said Bevan.

"It's very disappointing the Zimbabwe government decided, at the last minute, to drop a bombshell by deciding certain members of the media would not receive accreditation.

## Politics

"It's naive to say sport and politics don't mix."

"But you are able to draw a line in the sand and say you should not cross that particular line and certainly using players as political pawns is unacceptable."

Yesterday's events followed an

earlier ultimatum from ECB chairman David Morgan that England would pull out of the tour if the 13 banned journalists were not allowed access.

Morgan had been in talks with Peter Chingoka - president of Zimbabwe Cricket - over the issue.

Zimbabwe want to reschedule the cancelled game to tomorrow to set up back-to-back fixtures over the weekend but England's management are believed to be against the idea.

**Bevan said:** "The players have acted in a proper manner throughout by supporting the ECB in a very difficult position."

"They have also asked the ECB to reconsider the issue of replaying the match that has been cancelled tomorrow."

# 5 FOR FUN

- 1 Who is the Jamaican athlete who won silver (1968) and bronze (1972) in the men's 100 metres at the Olympics, who has died from cancer aged 52?
- 2 Who former Liverpool defender was manager of Bolton from 1985-92?
- 3 Which club did Claudio Ranieri manage to victory in the Italian Cup Final in 1996?
- 4 Which tennis couple have a son called Gigi?
- 5 What world record in 1982 was broken by a British relay team made up of Peter Elliott, Gary Cooks, Steve Cram and Seb Coe?

ANSWERS: See Page 77

# SPORTWORD

## ACROSS

- 1 Stoke City manager (5)
- 4 Tommy .... jockey who rode 21 across to win the Grand National in 1977 (5)
- 7 Arsenal and Brazil midfielder (3)
- 8 Jochen .... Formula One world champion in 1970 (5)
- 9 Country which staged the 1964 Summer Olympic Games (5)
- 10 The .... Classic held at Epsom (4)
- 11 Tony .... jockey who won the Grand National in 1997 (6)
- 14 Derby County manager (6)
- 15 Stephen .... Newcastle United and Eire defender (4)
- 18 Honerhan, former WBC welterweight champion (5)
- 20 ... Atzani, Nottinghamshire batsman, three England caps 2001 (5)
- 21 Red horse which won three Grand Nationals (5)
- 22 ... Gunnell, women's 400 metres hurdles Olympic champion in 1992 (5)
- 23 Olivier .... French Formula One driver born in 1966 (5)

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1	2	3	4	5	6
			7		
8				9	
10			11		12
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14				15	16
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18	19		20		
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# Brit boss's blast as Aussies call the shots in decider

# IT'S REFFIN' RIDICULOUS

**GREAT** Britain coach Brian Noble has slammed the appointment of Englishman Russell Smith as referee for tomorrow's Tri-Nations series final against Australia.

Neutral referees were used for all group matches but the International Federation gave way to Aussie pressure to put Smith in charge of the Elland Road decider.

Smith, from Castleford, refereed both Kangaroos' matches against the Kiwis while New Zealander Glen Black was in charge of the Anglo-Aussie clashes and was favoured by Britain for the final.

## Outstanding

"We're the only ones who haven't been refereed by Russell Smith which I think puts us at a disadvantage," Noble said. "I hope we don't have to be whiter than white."

"I'm not in any way asking for any favours from Russell Smith. The Australians had their way in that they got the referee they wanted.

"I think he's an outstanding referee. I just don't want the guy to feel

■ by MIKE PLATT

he's that under undue pressure to do anything for Australia."

Asked if he was concerned that Smith might subconsciously lean towards Australia in order to ensure he did not favour his home nation, Noble said: "In a lot of respects it's human nature.

"So the guy in the middle has got to be really tough with himself and I'm confident that he can be that."

"I like the bloke and I think he's an outstanding referee but he's under a lot of unnecessary pressure when we could have had a neutral ref."

Meanwhile, Noble gave little away about his likely line-up when he whittled his squad down to 19.

As expected, Paul Sculthorpe, Jamie Peacock, Sean Long, Ryan Bailey and Terry Newton return after being rested for last week's "dead rubber" against New Zealand.

**SQUAD:** P Wellens (St Helens), B Carney (Wigan), P Johnson (Salford), R Reardon (Salford), S Senior (Leeds), M Groom (Warrington), I Harris (Bradford), D McGuire (Leeds), S Long (St Helens), M Higham (St Helens), T Newton (Wigan), R Bailey (Leeds), A Morley (Sydney City), S Fielden (Bradford), A Farrell (Wigan, capt.), G Ellis (Wakefield), J Peacock (Bradford), S O'Loughlin (Wigan), P Sculthorpe (St Helens).



SCULTHORPE: Returning

■ THE International Board have decided the Tri-Nations has been such a success they will give it another go.

They don't know where or when the next one will occur but hope to make a decision by Christmas.

■ Meanwhile, the rival code has its Six Nations, Tri-Series, Super 12 and European Cup set in stone.

Yet league still hide in the suburbs of Sydney or the towns of northern England. Close on 190,000 will eventually watch this series – and still some Aussies want to file and forget!

## ANGLO-FRENCH

Tests could be back on the agenda after two impressive performances across the Channel.

New Zealand scraped home a fortnight ago, while Australia left it late before seeing off the fighting French in Toulouse.

■ All the signs were that France are on their way back and potential weekends in Carcassonne, Perpignan and Avignon would make a welcome addition to the staple Super League diet. Go for it.

# Tri-Nations a true test

DARREN LOCKYER reckons that even if Britain win tomorrow's Tri-Nations showdown at Elland Road, they won't be able to call themselves world champions.

Who does the Aussie skipper think he's kidding? If Britain win, we will call ourselves what we like and the Australians can lump it.

Even Lockyer agrees the Tri-Nations tournament involves the best three teams in the world.

And as any form of World Cup has been on ice since 2000 and Ashes series and tours have been abandoned, how else are we going to decide who are the world's best?

The last time Great Britain ruled the waves of world rugby league was back in 1972.

## Pint

Andrew Farrell hadn't been born; Brian Noble was still at junior school, and Tetley's Bitter was 12 pence a pint in even the best bars.

And even then it was a bit iffy.

The World Cup Final ended in a draw and Britain were crowned champions on the strength of their group win over Australia.

Since then it has been one long catalogue of doom and gloom, with only the occasional ray

## INSIDE RUGBY LEAGUE with Peter Wilson

of sunshine (Melbourne 1992 was one).

Farrell says this is the biggest game in the players' lives and the Lions are ready for it - the 40,000 fans inside Elland Road will feel the same.

The first Test I covered for the Daily Star was four days after the paper's birth, in November 1978.

It was at Olds and Britain beat Australia 18-14.

A similar result at Leeds tomorrow night would make the perfect retirement party...

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# IT'S A DANNY OLD GAME

Read Chief Football Writer Danny



## Fullbrook every Friday



# Milan deserves a meddle for Fratton farce

JIM SMITH had it spot on about the farce at Fratton Park.

The Bald Eagle said: "Football is a funny old game - and this is the funniest of them all."

He is absolutely right. Imagine telling somebody the story about a wheeling-dealing Premiership manager who, with next to nothing to spend, transformed his side from a lowly First Division outfit into a hard-working and exciting top-flight side.

Then tell them that in the last year they had twice beaten Manchester United and Liverpool, had twice drawn with Arsenal, while easily avoiding relegation.

And how about the fact the club have the best fans in the country and they simply adore their manager.

But then comes the crazy bit, about how the megalomaniac chairman and owner who thinks he knows best and effectively forces the manager to quit a club he loves in tears.

You know what they'd say: 'You're having a laugh'.

It is not quite panto season yet, but 'Oh no we're not'.

### Wrong

This is the ridiculous situation that Harry Redknapp has found himself in at Portsmouth because of the antics of Milan Mandaric.

**You wonder if the man should ever have been allowed to be near a football club in the first place.**

A good agent friend of mine has always said the thing that is wrong with football is that too many people get involved with areas they know nothing about.

That is exactly what happened with Peter Ridsdale at Leeds, when he ran out of control as chairman because he was a glorified fan. And look where they are now.

Mandaric is of the same mould. He thinks that just because he has money he knows how to run a football club.

Well he doesn't. Which is

13 DANNY right about Milan Mandaric and Pompey? Let him know your views. Text DANNY followed by a space then your views to 82100. Texts cost 25p plus normal operator rate. Or send him an e-mail to danny.fullbrook@ dailystar.co.uk

why he made such a great decision originally when he appointed Redknapp two-and-a-half years ago in the first place.

He has become arguably the greatest modern day manager in the modest history of Portsmouth

and has been loved by everybody at the club. And of course that may be the crux of the problem. Jealousy. Mandaric is the man who wants to be loved by the fans.

He wants his name chanted from the stands as the Pompey bells chime. He must feel hard done by by the fact he has ploughed his money into the club yet it is Redknapp who has got all the glory.

**Has he now risked wrecking everything through simple green-eyed envy?**

The problem started last season when he tried to

undermine Redknapp's authority at the club by insisting that he could no longer have Smith as his assistant.

Redknapp and Smith have been like Starsky and Hutch at Portsmouth, trouble-shooting from the start.

### Crest

That was where the soap opera started as Redknapp could not believe how Mandaric could be trying to interfere in a well-run ship which was sailing on the crest of a wave at the time.

But it did not stop there.

After Redknapp had persuaded Mandaric to keep his nose out the first time, he could not manage it this season.

So while Mandaric was twiddling his thumbs, watching Portsmouth make another good fist of the start to their season, what did he go and do?

**He decided to wind Redknapp up even more by bringing in an executive director in the shape of Velimir Zajec.**

So what happens? Redknapp said enough is enough and quite rightly realises he does not have to put up with this consid-

ering his standing in the game. He deserves so much more.

To say that Mandaric has self-destructed is an understatement, and there is certainly nothing funny about it for Portsmouth's fans and players who were all devastated by their manager's departure.

Of course the Premiership jungle drums have already started and the likes of Gordon Strachan and Glenn Hoddle have been mentioned as possible successors at Fratton Park.

But anybody who takes this job should watch their back, and what would be great would be if nobody does.

### Fool

Who on earth in their right mind would want this hot seat that could be pulled from underneath them at any point?

One thing for sure is that Redknapp and Smith remain two of the most respected men in football, and they will both be snapped up by a new club quickly.

**Mandaric will go down in the history of the game as nothing less than a fool, and he deserves everything he**



ARM OFF: Vieira hands over to Henry

## Eur own fault

IS IT any surprise that once the pressure is on, Arsenal players start being sent off.

However hard done-by Arsene Wenger feels about the fact no PSV Eindhoven players were not reprimanded for their fouls on Wednesday, Patrick Vieira and Lauren only have themselves to blame for putting the club's Champions League future at risk.

Just when Wenger needs him most, Vieira finds himself suspended for the vital last

group game against Norwegian Rosenborg.

Irresponsible is the only way to look at it. But then again the whole team is.

**To leave themselves in this position after the form they were in at the start of the season is ridiculous, and although the players may have let Arsenal down, Wenger has to take the blame because when it comes to the crunch in Europe he does not have the answers.**

DENNIS WISE will fly to Italy next week for treatment on a calf injury and will miss Millwall's match against Burnley tomorrow.

**CHESTERFIELD** have re-signed Charlton star Jamal Campbell-Ryce on loan until the end of the season. The winger has just completed his three-month loan with the Spireites.

**SUNDERLAND** are still £40m in debt despite a series of cost-cutting measures that saw the Championship promotion hopefuls reduce losses from £19m to £1.2m in the 12 months ending July 2004, according to their annual results published yesterday.

**LEEDS** boss Kevin Blackwell wants Brett Ormerod back at Elland Road after being told Brian Deane will be sidelined for up to six weeks with a torn hamstring suffered against Watford on Wednesday.

**DERBY** have cancelled the contract of Peru striker Gianfranco Labarthe Tome with immediate effect.

**LEYTON ORIENT** boss Martin Ling and his assistant Ian Culverhouse have signed long-term extensions to their current deals which will keep them at the club until 2007.

**ROTHERHAM** boss Ronnie Moore has been told he will not be offered a new contract next summer if chairman Ken Booth is still at the helm. Meanwhile, Rotherham striker Richie Barker has joined League Two side Mansfield on a free.

**SWANSEA** have signed Bristol City winger Marc Goodfellow on a month's loan.

**SHEFFIELD UNITED** boss Neil Warnock has rejected a bid from Nottingham Forest to take Jack Lester back to his former club.

**IAN HOLLOWAY** has been warned by doctors not to take charge of QPR's clash with Cardiff tomorrow. The Rangers boss was discharged from hospital this week after undergoing tests on a stomach complaint.

**FORMER** Barnsley and Sheffield Wednesday boss Danny Wilson is on the shortlist to replace Tony Adams at Wycombe.

**BRENTFORD** boss Martin Allen has rubbished reports linking him with the vacant Gillingham post.

**WEST BROM** have been told they will have to pay around £4m to land Anderlecht's Ivory Coast striker Aruna Dindane.

**FORMER** Stockport manager Dave Jones and ex-Sheffield Wednesday boss Chris Turner are among the front-runners to replace Sammy McIlroy as manager at Stockport.

**BIRMINGHAM** boss Steve Bruce has denied any hopes of Sunderland acquiring loanee Darren Carter on a permanent basis.

**STEVE BULL**, the former Wolves and England striker, has had his application for the manager's job at Kidderminster rejected by the League Two side.

## TEXT MANIACS

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2 west hamsters, your team & your fans were a joke. Lions do iron every time. the ginger lion  
 I LOVE SUNDALEND TILL I DIE F T M.  
**DOTTA BISHOP AUCK**  
 Rooney is another gazza will be finished at 25. John

flash in the pan my a\*\*\*. The blue boys are back and 9 points above the red crap moysey the legend. Redmo EFC

What spanish fans did was disgraceful but how dare u england fans criticise us! U've got the worst hooligans in the world! Pablo

GET OVER IT CELTIC THE GERS R BACK.  
**BOLTON BLUENOSE**

COULDNT AGREE MORE WITH JONNY RED SCUM ONLY SING WHEN THERE WINNING REST OF THE TIME THERE BOOING, T\*\*\*. COOPS

**SACF**

2 jorrry red, u got 1 part ov it rite, home support, not from ireland, scotland, wales, manc p\*\*\*. **jardy star**  
 FED UP WITH CURBISHLEY, its time our clueless manager resigned and make way 4 redknapp GO NOW CURB PLEASE!

**ANON**

We cant fill our ground but we will fill poxy Cheeters in LDV. **S.Gun**  
**Wxm FL**

with all the palaver over rooney & that arm band, it seems to of slipped by that ashley cole wasn't even wearing one. **The Judge**

nice 2 c 15,000 mackems on sunday in fancy dress, shame they all turned up as red plastic seats!  
Loyal my a\*\*\* I. **Andy Blyth**

**SMB**

what's rdo doin in an anti-bullying advert when he plays 4 team of bullies. w\*\*\* gooner

NICE 1 JIMMY FADDY GR8 2 C LOYALTY BACK IN FASHION ASK GRAEME SHARP WOT EVERTON R LIKE WEN DER BUZZIN KEEPS THE FAITH FADDY YUL B IMORTL LK SHARPY. **EFC GY**

HALIFAX TOWN, 3rd in the league but never any mention in your non-league bit!! **Pete hxtc**

How come me msgs dont get shown sent 2now its a joke like efc and ffc scum. trfc 04/05 champs. **mark**

Credit to Robbie Savage, giving an amount of money towards Wrexham's plight. Good luck. If we can survive so can u. Fans will prevail. **Mark@Efc**

to dave saint you are right saints are coming ... To the coca cola championship! Play up Pompey!!! **newmo**

TO DAVE IN WAKEY YOU WERENT SINGIN WHEN THE CLARETS CAME TO TOWN.. PREMIERSHIP YOUR HAVIN A LAUGH REMEMBER THE SONG REMEMBER THE BURNLEY. **A. CLARET**

2 willy you sad luff we did you easily at old trafford if we are awful what are you? **sean lufc**

I'm not a racist but get over what the spanish fans did. What about all the white farmers in zimbabwe. **S.U.F.C top blade**

ban england cause their fans are worse of the lot! just look at way they treat black prem stars! one rule for some. **taffman**

edy u dont no wat ur talkin bout sheerer is the greatest forward this country has seen hope ur club folds still northeasts not! **mark nufc**

**SERIOUSLY  
football**

## Allardyce defends Bolton tactics and brands

# BIG BOYS BASH

## THE BIG INTERVIEW

with **BRIAN WOOLNOUGH**



THERE is a new game being played in the Premiership these days. It's called Bashing Bolton and Big Sam is having some fun with it.

Graeme Souness kicked it off after losing his first game as Newcastle manager at the Reebok Stadium and, since then, David O'Leary and Jose Mourinho have jumped on the bandwagon.

"They enjoy a glass of red wine in my office after the game and say nice things to my face, and then slag us off in front of the TV camera," says boss Sam Allardyce with a big smile.

"Mind you, Jacques Santini, when he was at Spurs, and Rafael Benitez at Liverpool, wouldn't even shake my hand after we'd beaten them. They just ignored me."

Sour grapes, jealousy, frustration at being beaten by little old Bolton, Allardyce puts the unfair criticism down to all of those things.

It's just that Bolton are not little any more. They are up with the big boys, led there by 50-year-old, 6ft 2in Allardyce.

He has a squad drawn from 13 different nations who have grown to love the dream that Sam is playing out.

It began five years ago and has a long way to run. It's why he turned down Newcastle recently. There is a job to finish and he's rightly proud of what Bolton have achieved.

### Tactics

He's also amused at the stick other managers are giving his tactics. Defensive, long ball, they were even called the new Wimborne the other day.

Allardyce adds: "When Graeme Souness had a go I went and checked Pro Zone (the filmed breakdown of statistics and match facts) which doesn't lie. Newcastle hit 12 more long balls in that game than us.

*"It strikes me others are using Bolton to cover up their defeats. They are using Bolton as an excuse and it's definitely catching on."*

"What they would like is for us to play a lovely open game, lose 3-1 and get a pat on the back at the end with them saying 'Great game, Sam.' Well, stuff that.

"Sure, we play to our strengths and we have a winning formula. Yes, we get it to Kevin Davies quickly and if that means going long we will. But we mix it up.

"Do you honestly think players like Gary Speed and Radhi Jaidi would have signed for us if we played defensive football and simply hit it long.

"The other thing I hear is because Bolton are close to the top the Premiership can't be as strong. That is



**SOUNESS:** Blasted Bolton

an insult to me and the players I have got here.

"This squad is full of winners, European winners, players who have excelled at the top. It's littered with medals.

"Go back four years and look at the starting XI and compare it to now. Unrecognisable.

"I had to beg, steal and borrow players at the start. Now I can say to internationals, this is what we have achieved, this is where we aim to go, and they want to play for us.

"If people think we are still little old Bolton then good, because they are all in for a shock. I'll play on that card if that is what they want.

### System

"What others say about the Premiership just because us, Everton and Boro are in there fighting is disrespectful.

"We have a system that works for us and I'll tell you what, 30 per cent of others in the Premiership are now using four-five-one, like Everton and Crystal Palace. Even Chelsea at times.

"On Saturday at Stamford Bridge our plan was to stop them playing, sit back, deny them and surprise them.

"When Damien Duff scored after 30 seconds we had to adjust and did. Chelsea had only conceded one at home this season, never let a two-goal lead



**'Santini and Benitez both ignored me after the match'**



# bitter rival bosses as bad losers US BUT IT'S JUST SOUR GRAPES

**BOLT FROM THE BLUE:**  
Kevin Davies, whose career was rescued by Big Sam, repaid his boss with a vital goal at Chelsea to delight his boss



slip and we got a point. At 1-0 and 2-0 I thought we would lose and was delighted with the players.

"Mourinho, as the new kid on the block, was friendly with me afterwards, and said we were a difficult team to play against.

**"It was nothing like he told the TV people. OK, if we upset people, we upset people."**

Allardice is rightly proud of some of the players he has rescued, like Davies, whose career was going nowhere.

"He knew it was his last chance and there are now not many defenders who can handle him. He has

battered a few and John Terry at Chelsea was the best all season at stopping Kevin.

"I can't compete with the transfer fees going around and, unlike Chelsea, I don't have £140m to put a side together.

#### Quality

"I can afford to pay Speed a good salary because he only cost us £600,000 and I'd say we were in the top six of salary payers in the Premiership.

He's passionate about football, passionate about Bolton and finds it amusing that fellow Premiership managers are bashing Bolton to deflect their own shortcomings.

**"Every side we face tries to stop my midfield playing," he adds.**

In many ways he is the new Brian Clough and very much his own man.

"When I look at our opponents I ask myself one question: 'How can we beat them?' and plan

accordingly. It is the nature of this country to knock something that is successful and it's our turn. 'Look at Bolton right up there, let's put a stop to that.' We are not here to be bullied.

"What will they say if we are still up here at the end of January?

#### Success

"This is the best start we have had in the Premiership and if the board give me a couple of bob in the window, who knows, we might go even higher.

**"Our success allows me to secure good players on longer contracts."**

"Look, I'm proud of Bolton and all I want to do is keep progressing.

"I have started something here and want to finish it."

And he will, his way. With a smile at the bashers.

**'They say nice things to my face then slag us off on TV'**

# Wolves bid to lure Harry

■ by DAVE ARMITAGE

WOLVES last night told Harry Redknapp he's the man they want to steer them back into the Premiership.

But they may have to wait because Redknapp is insisting he's looking for a top-flight job after his walk-out at Portsmouth on Wednesday.

Redknapp said: "Wolves is a great club and just like when I first went to Pompey. Everybody said it was a sleeping giant I would never wake up but Wolves have already been woken.

"It's a terrific stadium with great support and a great job for someone."

One man who has already turned them down is ex-FA coach Stuart Baxter, who is presently coaching in South Africa.

Baxter, who was also approached by Wolves before they gave the job to recently-sacked Dave Jones, is committed to taking South Africa to the World Cup Finals in 2006.

#### Future

Meanwhile, Redknapp returned to Pompey's training ground yesterday to say farewell to players and backroom staff.

Redknapp, 57, will spend this weekend in Spain contemplating his future on a short golfing break with his close friend and assistant Jim Smith, who has also quit Pompey.

Redknapp - who has been linked with a move to Southampton - has already received one job offer in addition to the Wolves approach.

But he revealed he'd relish one final chance at managing in the top



SO LONG: Redknapp and Zajec at Harry's farewell

flight. He said: "I'm not finished as a Premiership manager. I've got another top job in me and I've still got the enthusiasm."

"I've already had one chairman on the phone. It would be unfair to say who that was but I'm not sure about Wolves.

"I'm going to have a golfing weekend with Jim Smith and decide my

future from there." New executive director Velimir Zajec will take charge of Portsmouth's game at Bolton tomorrow, while former Southampton managers Gordon Strachan and Glenn Hoddle are the early favourites to take over the job on a permanent basis.

**See Danny Old Game:  
Page 73**

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# Giggs close to Wales KO

■ by KEVIN FRANCIS

RYAN GIGGS came within a whisker of quitting international football following the departure of Wales boss Mark Hughes.

But, in a move that will be music to the ears of new boss John Toshack, Giggs has had a re-think and now plans to play on for his country for another four or five years.

Giggs has also told Spanish radio that he would not rule out a move to Real Madrid.

The 31-year-old winger is currently negotiating an extension to the one-and-a-half years he has left on his Manchester United deal but he is spending more and more time on the bench at Old Trafford and the idea of a Spanish swansong could appeal.

## Best

Giggs, asked about joining former club pal David Beckham at the Bernabeu, said: "The Spanish League is on a par with the Premiership as the best in the world, and although for now I'm a Manchester United player you never know."

And he admits he nearly called time on his Welsh career. He added: "I must admit that when Sparky left, and then when Gary Speed and Mark Pemberton retired from international football, it did cross my mind to call it a day too.

"But in the end I knew that I definitely wanted to carry on playing for Wales."

# I've Earned a starting role

■ by DAVE ARMITAGE

GOAL ace Robert Earnshaw has warned new West Brom boss Bryan Robson that he won't be happy with a place on the bench against Manchester United.

The Wales star came on as a substitute against Arsenal and promptly made it four goals in his last three games.

Now the club's £3m record buy believes he's staked a proper claim to make the starting line-up under the new regime.

Earnshaw said: "Yes, it would bother me if I was on the bench - you can't be a football player and not want to play."

## Happy

So much so, he revealed he had held private talks with the new gaffer to try and make sure he could get in from the start.

He added: "What was said will remain between the manager and me but he is happy and thinks I've done well."

"I just want to play. I have found it easy to make the jump to the Premiership because I have been used to playing big international games."

"It hasn't always been easy off the pitch because I'm still living in a hotel and I've not got anywhere I can call home yet."

# Upson piles pressure on

■ by DAVE ARMITAGE

DON'T ask England star Matthew Upson if he's feeling the pressure right now...

The Birmingham centre-half took a blood pressure test at a club promotion yesterday and was handed a real shock - a higher than normal reading of 160/64.

Upson, who has been linked with moves to Barcelona and Newcastle, said: "Life is full of surprises, but I do feel fine. I had a bit of a heated conversation just before I came in so perhaps that contributed to it."

## Talks

Upson was at a promotion for Lloyds-pharmacy who are offering free blood pressure tests to fans to try and highlight the problem known as the 'silent killer'.

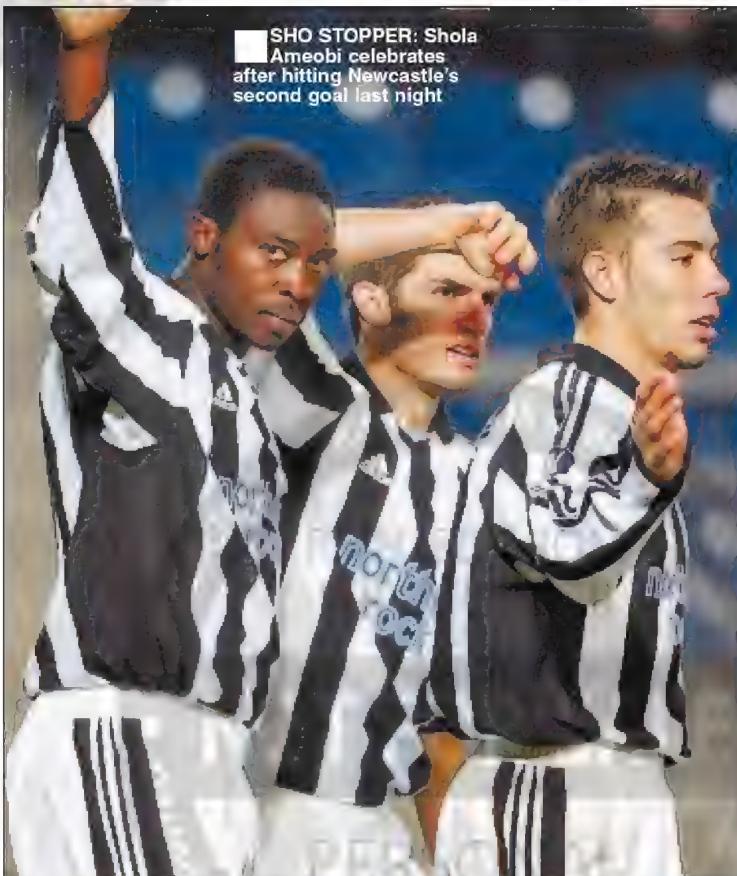
Pharmacist Shafeeqe Mohammed said: "Matthew had been rushing around and that wouldn't have helped, but he hasn't got anything to worry about."

Upson's main concerns right now are new contract talks. He added: "It's flattering to be linked with clubs but I am getting round to talks with Birmingham about a new deal."

SERIOUSLY  
football

# UEFA CUP: Magpies on the march

# SOU EASY FOR TOON



**SHO STOPPER:** Shola Ameobi celebrates after hitting Newcastle's second goal last night



**LUV-LEE STRIKE:** Lee Bowyer crashes home Newcastle's first

NEWCASTLE breezed through to the knockout stages of the UEFA Cup last night - and they didn't even have to kick a ball.

Goals from Lee Bowyer, Shola Ameobi, Craig Bellamy and Laurent Robert ensured victory here in France.

But before then, Sporting Lisbon's 4-0 success against Dynamo Tbilisi meant the Toon had already qualified for the next stage, which begins in February.

It made this clash something of an irrelevance, although both sides would have been keen to go through as Group D winners, allowing them to avoid the teams dropping down from the Champions League in the last 32.

And Graeme Souness's men came out on top, with Bowyer giving them a half-time lead with his first goal of the season then Ameobi adding a second immediately after the break.

Sochaux missed a penalty to get themselves back in the game, before Bellamy and Robert's superb strike wrapped up a fine win.

Toon weathered the home side's early pressure, with Titus Bramble particularly impressive at the back.

## Guilty

And just before the half-hour mark, the Magpies made their growing confidence count with a fine goal as Bowyer found the net for only the third time in 43 appearances.

Ameobi did well to snatch the ball off defender Gregory Paisley and the strapping striker turned to set up Bowyer, who from 20 yards drilled a low shot into the corner of the net.

Seconds later Ameobi fired a yard wide and with Newcastle's next attack, James Milner was guilty of missing an absolute sitter.

Shay Given had spotted Bellamy unmarked on the right flank and picked out the Welsh ace with a rak-

**from GEORGE SCOTT**

**Sochaux .....0**  
**Newcastle ..4**

ing 70-yard pass. Before Sochaux had time to recover, Bellamy had skipped to the by-line and crossed for Milner, who from inside the six-yard box somehow managed to fire his volley over the bar.

**But Newcastle did not have it all their way, and they had keeper Given to thank for a couple of superb saves.**

He first pulled off a brave stop to deny Ilian, and minutes later made a stunning one-handed save to keep out Michael Isabey's low shot.

Ameobi extended Toon's lead just 49 seconds into the second half.

## Tug

Bellamy made inroads down the left before releasing Olivier Bernard, whose cross looked easy enough for Paisley to clear; only for the defender to wildly swipe at the ball leaving Ameobi with the easiest of finishes at the far post.

Just after the hour mark, Spanish ref Megia Bavilla awarded a penalty for an apparent tug on Isabey's shirt, but Jeremy Mathieu rolled his spot-kick wide.

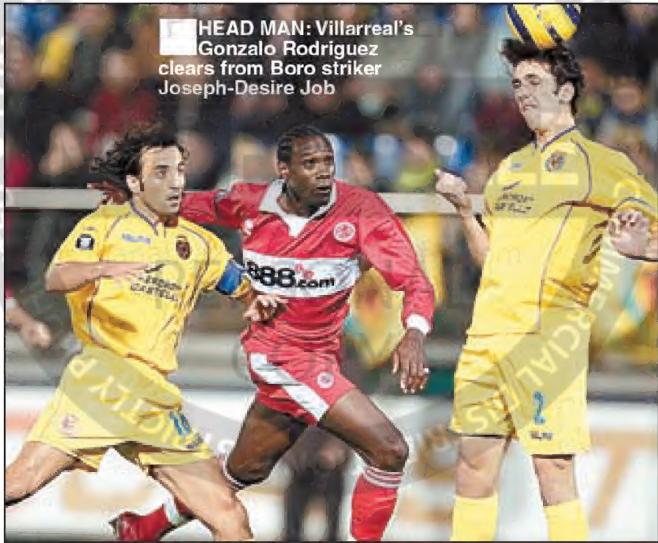
**With quarter of an hour left, Bellamy latched on to a through-ball from Aaron Hughes to make it 3-0.**

And Robert finished off the rout in stoppage time with a fantastic left-footed free-kick from 20 yards.

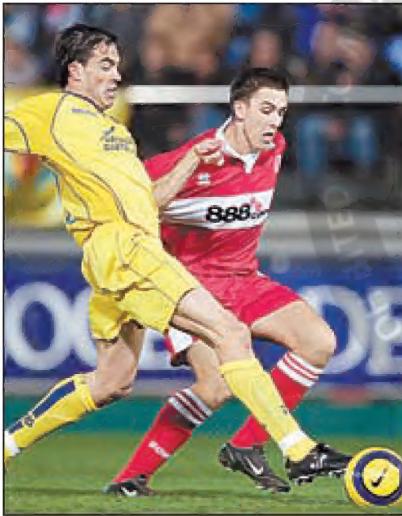
## TEAMS

<b>SOCHAUX:</b> Richard, Paisley, Davies, Bell, Milner, Lovell, Orlan, Isabey, Milner, Bernard, Gomis, Santos.
<b>NEWCASTLE:</b> Given, Bramble, Hughes, Clark, Bowyer, Bramble, Milner, Armero, Bellamy, Subasic, Harper, Bell, Robert, James, Taylor, Dyer, McRae.
<b>RESERVE:</b> (Spain)

# as Mac's men stumble on glory road



**HEAD MAN:** Villarreal's Gonzalo Rodriguez clears from Boro striker Joseph-Desire Job



ON THE RUN: Boro's Stewart Downing

# SPAIN-FUL FOR BORO

MIDDLESBROUGH lost their first European battle last night but can still win the war after a bitter-sweet night in Spain.

Having gone down to goals from Antonio Guayre and Javi Venta, they trooped back to the dressing room to discover they were through to the last 32 of the Uefa Cup.

For Lazio's failure to beat Partizan Belgrade in Rome means that, barring a mathematical fluke, Boro are guaranteed a top three finish in Group E.

*Steve McLaren's decision to tinker with his team selection was in danger of backfiring when Antonio Guayre shot Villarreal into a 37th minute lead.*

The Boro chief had left out strikers Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and Mark Viduka plus the experienced Ray Parlour from the side which beat Liverpool last Saturday.

And in stark contrast to that game, shot-shy Boro struggled to hit the heights of recent weeks with an error-strewn performance.

## Slow

Villarreal were not much better and Guayre's stunning goal was out of character with the turgid stuff that had preceded it.

McClaren, however, would not have been happy at the room Guayre was allowed as he ran on to Riquelme's through ball.

Chris Riggott was slow to close him down as he beat Mark Schwarzer with a rising right foot drive.

Stadio El Madrigal was little more than two-thirds full but the 4,000 Boro fans turned it into a mini-Riverside, creating a party atmosphere with their vocal backing.

Thankfully, there was no repeat of the racist chants which marred England's friendly in Madrid last week. McLaren's decision to rest his

**from IAN MURTAGH**  
**Villarreal.....2**  
**Boro.....0**

key players ahead of Sunday's Premiership trip to Spurs will see the visitors line up with Joseph Job operating as a lone striker supported by a five-man midfield.

With Villarreal regarded as one of Primera Liga's strongest defensive units, there were few chances early on with Boro content to sit tight and contain their opponents.

Nevertheless, with Stewart Downing an outlet on the left, his team-mates tried to find him at every opportunity and from one typically incisive run and cross, Job just failed to connect in the middle.

Downing had the first shot on target in the 19th minute when he latched on to Job's fine pass, raced into the penalty area and shot right-footed towards the near post with keeper Jose Maria Reina turning the ball behind.

Gareth Southgate picked up a 31st booking for a foul on Riquelme and from the resulting free-kick, the Spaniards almost scored.

*Riquelme, easily the most influential figure on the pitch, curled his set-piece around the wall only for Schwarzer to fling himself to his left and push the ball away.*

The Aussie keeper then displayed brilliant improvisation to thwart Josico, who was following up. Despite being grounded, he managed to clear the loose ball with an outstretched leg.

But Schwarzer's heroics were in vain with Guayre shooting the ball inside within a minute.

Boro were clearly in need of a half-time tonic, and McLaren provided it by switching to 4-4-2 and replacing

Doriva and Job with Hasselbaink and Viduka.

Viduka at least provided a spark in the 49th minute when he embarked on a run which led to an unlikely pass to Boateng who was surrounded by several yellow shirts at the time.

Boateng was primed to shoot when he was fouled by Villarreal captain Quique Alvarez five yards outside the area, but Nemeth's free-kick struck the wall and was eventually cleared.

After ballooning a shot high into the stands soon afterwards, Viduka turned on the style by twisting and turning his way past two defenders before unleashing a low 20-yard shot which was inches beyond the left-hand post.

## Neat

Riggott, who scored against Liverpool, thought he'd equalised three minutes later when he found the net from close range but the linesman flagged for offside.

Michael Reiziger replaced Tony McMahon to add more attacking options but the Spaniards went two up with a superb 75th minute goal from Javi Venta.

He played a neat one-two with Riquelme and then held off a Riggott challenge to beat Schwarzer with a rising shot from a tight angle.

## TEAMS

**VILLARREAL:** Reina, Javi Venta, Rodriguez, Quique Alvarez, Arribalzaga, Josico, Arzo, Hector For, Riquelme, Sant Cazorla, Guayre, Subs: Lopez Vallejo, Pena, Amadoro Sa, Xisco Nadal, Garcia, Jonthon.

**MIDDLESBROUGH:** Schwarzer, McMahon, Riggott, Southgate, Queudrue, Nemeth, Doriva, Zenden, Boateng, Downing, Job. Subs: Nash, Reiziger, Parhurst, Hasselbaink, Cooper, Morrison, Viduka.

**REFEREE:** Jan Wegeroff (Holland).

# Information Station

## UEFA Cup

### Group G

Benfica .....	(2)	Din Zagreb .....	(0)	0
VfB Stuttgart .....	2	0	0	8
Benfica .....	3	1	1	6
Din Zagreb .....	3	1	1	3
Heerenveen .....	1	0	1	2
Beveren .....	2	0	2	11

(Not including Heerenveen v VfB Stuttgart)

### Group H

AEK Athens ..(0)	1	Lille ..(1)	2
Zenit SP ..(1)	1	Seville ..(0)	1
Lille ..(2)	3	2	0
Zenit St Petersburg ..(1)	1	1	1
Seville ..(2)	1	1	0
Allem Aachen ..(2)	2	0	1
AZK ..(0)	2	0	2

### FA Cup

First Round Replay
Brentford ..(1)
1 Bristol City ..(0)
Franton 44

Heffernan 77  
Att: 3,706  
(After 90 minutes, extra time)

### BASKETBALL

BBL: Scottish Rocks 100 Thame Valley 84
-----------------------------------------

### SNOOKER

TRAVIS PERKINS UK CHAMPIONSHIP (York) – Quarter-final: S Maguire (Sco) v S Lee (Eng) 9-4; J Parrott (Eng) level with M King (Eng) 4-4.
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### TODAY'S DIARY

FOOTBALL
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(7.30 unless stated)

Coca-Cola League Two
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Cheltenham v Darlington .....

Southend v Grimsby .....

Vauxhall Masterfit Welsh Prem: Llanelli v Alan Lido (7.30).

### BASKETBALL

(7.30 unless stated)

BBL: Championship: Plymouth v Leicester, Milton Keynes Sheffield.
-------------------------------------------------------------------

### BOXING

British light-middleweight title

(Altrincham): J Moon (Salford) v M Jones (Liverpool).

### CRICKET

Second Test – Day 1 of 5: Australia v New Zealand (Adelaide, midnight).

RUGBY UNION
-------------

(7.30 unless stated)

International

Wales v Japan (7pm) .....

(at the Millennium Stadium)

Zurich Premiership: Gloucester v

Salisbury, Worcester v Wasps (8pm).

### SNOOKER

The Travis Perkins UK

Championship (York).

YESTERDAY'S SPORTWORD
-----------------------

ACROSS: 1 Woodgate, 7 Cisse, 8 Ross, 9 Desert, 10 Bath, 12 Mike, 14 Gordon, 17 Reiko, 18 Donna, 19 Bicknell.

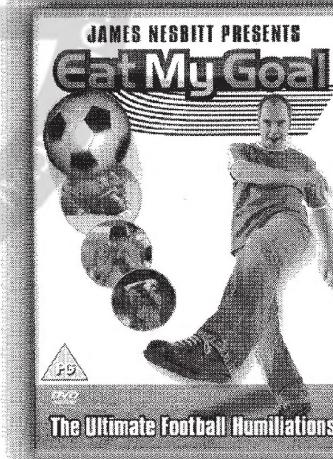
DOWN: 1 Wasps, 2 O'Meara, 3 Gary, 4 Tessa, 5 Scudamore, 6 Tim Henman, 11 Hoddle, 13 Kelli, 15 Donald, 16 Jock.

### 5 FOR FUN ANSWERS

1 Lennox Miller, 2 Phil Neal, 3 Fiorentini, 4 Andre Agassi and

5 Steffi Graf, 5,4 x 800 metres relay.

# JAMES NESBITT'S ULTIMATE FOOTBALL HUMILIATIONS



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## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: Why stressed-out



**TOP DOG:**  
In-form  
Arjen  
Robben

## Robben's piling on pressure

■ by DANNY FULLBROOK

ARJEN ROBBEN has urged his Chelsea team-mates to make sure they are Premiership leaders when they face title rivals Arsenal next month.

Jose Mourinho's side go to Highbury on December 12 and Blues wonder-kid Robben wants Chelsea to pile the pressure on the Gunners by not dropping a point between now and then in the Premiership.

Robben said: "We cannot lose a point now until we play Arsenal. We have to play at Charlton and at home to Newcastle before we play Arsenal and we have to win both matches, that's very important."

"Arsenal are struggling in the Champions League, which is an advantage for us because we are through already."

"Arsenal still have to fight. They drew against PSV and need to win the last match against Rosenborg, so they have to play full out in every match."

"They are not in a good period but that can change very quickly if they play one very good game."

"I wouldn't talk about crisis but they're not having as good a period as they were before."

### Strength

Robben was delighted to see Didier Drogba's return to fitness as he came on in Wednesday's 0-0 draw with Paris St-Germain.

And he feels it proves Chelsea's strength in depth that they went top of the Premiership and qualified for the Champions League while their £24m striker was out.

Robben added: "It was very important to have him back as he has a lot of qualities including incredible pace and power."

"But to be able to bring him on shows the power and depth of our squad."

"If you can replace a few players and rest them, you can make sure their energy levels are not going down."

"We have a lot of quality and that will be a strength at the end of the season."

"To be able to rotate players and keep them fresh is very important at this stage of the season."

## Blues chase Nuno

CHELSEA are hoping to sign Portugal Under-18 star Nuno Coelho in the January transfer window.

Boss Jose Mourinho has targeted the highly-rated defensive midfielder, who plays for second division side Sporting Covilhã.

And Coelho, 17, is eager to become part of the growing Portuguese colony at Stamford Bridge.

He said: "Chelsea are interested in me and I am very tempted to join them. Jose Mourinho is a coach who puts faith in young players."

"I am also a big fan of Tiago. He plays in my position and it would be a great opportunity for me to join him and the other Portuguese players at Chelsea."

# WENGER'S



**SAVIOUR:**  
Robert Pires congratulates Thierry Henry after his stunning goal earned Arsenal a draw at PSV

### GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	APts
PSV	5	3	1	1	5	3 10
Arsenal	5	1	4	0	6	5 7
Panathinaikos	5	1	3	1	7	7 6
Rosenborg	5	0	2	3	5	8 2

TO PLAY - Dec 7: Panathinaikos v PSV, Arsenal v Rosenborg.

## Henry set to Kop out

■ by DAVID WOODS

THIERRY HENRY looks certain to miss Arsenal's crunch clash at Liverpool on Sunday after becoming the latest victim of the club's devastating injury crisis.

The French striker had treatment on his Achilles injury at half-time in the 1-1 draw at PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday and yesterday was at the club's training ground for treatment.

But it is understood boss Arsene Wenger will not risk inflaming the injury, with the Gunners boss already facing a selection dilemma for the final Champions League group match against Rosenborg in 12 days.

Henry revealed last week he had been carrying the injury and was only 70 per cent fit.

Wenger is also aware the

Henry. "When you are in pain, you always get a knock on it."

Henry's fellow striker Jose Reyes, who also needed treatment yesterday and at half-time at PSV, is a doubt for the Anfield clash as well with a knee injury.

And Dennis Bergkamp has a slight Achilles injury, which ruled him out of being driven to Holland, but should play.

### Tested

Young striker Jeremie Aliadiere (knee) and Brazilian midfielders Gilberto (back) and Andre Ooijer (broken toe) are long-term absences, with Wenger's limited squad being severely tested.

There was some good news for Arsenal, however, when it was revealed striker Robin van Persie, who was carried off in

Eindhoven, had suffered only bruising to his knee and no ligament damage.

Despite his painful night, Henry was upbeat yesterday, hailing the nine-man Gunners for showing tremendous battling qualities.

After Lauren and skipper Patrick Vieira were sent off, Wenger's men held on for the draw, which means they will qualify for the last 16 if they beat Rosenborg in 12 days.

"Once again everyone's been questioning our commitment," admitted Henry.

"But against PSV you saw a team with commitment with the way we played and the way we came back in the game."

"It's in our hands and we can't have it more than that."

Highbury chief is a touchline menace

# MAKING HIS GUNNERS SEE RED



Says PSV boss GUUS HIDDINK

**ARSENÉ WENGER** is to blame for Arsenal's shocking red-card record and his team's lack of discipline.

That is the view of PSV Eindhoven coach Guus Hiddink, who last night claimed the Gunners boss puts his players under too much stress with his own touchline antics, causing Patrick Vieira and Lauren to lose control.

Hiddink accused Wenger of needing to learn how to lose before the sides' Champions League draw on Wednesday, a game which saw Arsenal have defender Lauren and skipper Vieira sent off.

#### Stressed

Now he has taken it further, with an interesting possible insight into why Arsenal struggle in Europe and have such a dreadful time with referees.

Hiddink said: "What Wenger gets up to on the touchline puts his players under too much pressure. He is not relaxed and his mood gets to them. You could sense them getting stressed during the game."

"They have a poor disciplinary record and this could be a reason why."

"With the kind of quality players Arsenal have, they don't need to play on the edge, don't need to be wound up. They

■ from BRIAN WOOLNOUGH in Eindhoven

have wonderful talent and if they were allowed to relax more, they would be better for it."

"Take Thierry Henry. Give me him and I would guarantee PSV reaching the Champions League semi-final, at least."

"Wenger needs to act like a gentleman on the touchline instead of moaning all the time about decisions. He was trying to influence the fourth official throughout the game and that is not right."

"Big clubs don't need to do it. Great teams shouldn't."

"In the end, what he did backfired on him with two players sent off. They didn't mean to get red-carded but his mood got to them."

"We all like to win, yet you can't all the time. We don't agree with a lot of decisions that are made but the referee is in control and you are not going to change his mind."

"What is the point of moaning and being in the face of the fourth official?"

"In every walk of life, whatever you do, you must give everything, try and be the best, and that is what football is all about."

"When it goes wrong you have to stand back and reflect, not blame others. You must look at yourself and discover what has gone wrong."

"It is sometimes best to wait a little while before saying things."

Hiddink was bitterly disappointed. Wenger went public by saying he thought PSV star Mark van Bommel got away with too much physical stuff during the 1-1 draw.

#### Setbacks

"I don't usually get involved with this kind of thing," he added. "But it needs to be said. Arsenal should know by now how to cope with setbacks."

"What I saw only put his players under too much pressure. You are not going to get results if you have tense players. They need confidence."

"You have to be big enough to let things go, say well done to others and go on to the next



■ OFF TWO GO: Vieira and Lauren (inset) are sent off during the Champions League game in Holland

## Germ warfare on ref

■ by DAVID WOODS

night's draw with PSV Eindhoven – a match which saw Lauren and Patrick Vieira sent-off and Freddie Ljungberg booked.

Lehmann had first-hand experience of Fandel's antics after being sent-off by the ref for arguing with A TEAM-MATE while at Borussia Dortmund!

Fandel dismissed Lehmann at Schalke in February last year.

game. In football, you must be a good loser."

Hiddink's comments follow a series of controversies for Wenger, who is facing a personal hearing at the FA after being charged for calling Ruud van Nistelrooy a cheat after last month's 2-0 defeat at Manchester United.

The Frenchman is known for his inability to see anything wrong with Arsenal, while he continually questions other teams and their players.

It has become a joke in the game that Wenger never sees a controversial incident, unless it is against his side.

His war of words with his arch-rival – Manchester

United boss Sir Alex Ferguson – has become an annual focal point in the race for honours.

But this is the first time anyone has accused him of winding up his own players and putting them under too much pressure.

#### Worry

Former Holland coach Hiddink, who took South Korea to the semi-finals of the 2002 World Cup, believes Wenger could be the root of the red mist which has regularly descended on his players since he took over in 1996.

He added: "It is just a thought and something that would worry me."

Yet he is not the first

manager to accuse Wenger of being a bad loser.

Sir Bobby Robson said the same after Newcastle won a heated Premiership battle at St James' Park.

Arsenal were again not at their best on Wednesday night and now must beat Rosenborg at home in the last group E game to guarantee going through to the money-spinning knockout stage.

But once more they have struggled in Europe and Hiddink added pointedly: "I don't have Arsenal's budget and in the summer had to sell players like Kezman and Robben."

"Arsenal have some wonderful players all coaches would love to work with."

## Becks crisis talks

From Back Page  
again for getting possibly booked against Wales.

But Eriksson said on a visit to the HQ of England team partners, Nationwide: "I believe David Beckham will get back to his best soon, it will happen."

"I cannot believe he is finished as a football player. He is not and I am quite sure of that."

"I will go and see him in Madrid before February and I will talk to him."

"I do not want to criticise the tactics of Real Madrid, but for me he can play better if he is on the right of a three-man midfield."

"Or if you want to play a four-man midfield then he should be on the far right, that is his best position."

"But playing for Real when they are struggling is very difficult."

#### Concern

"Not many of their players are playing well and the expectation is that they should win every game and the club's players just have to handle that."

Another player that has caused Eriksson concern is Wayne Rooney after he had to substitute him before half-time in last week's friendly against Spain.

The Sweden acknowledges that it is up to him and Rooney's club boss Sir Alex Ferguson to keep the 19-year-old wonderkid on the straight and narrow.

Rooney angered fans by throwing off his black armband, worn in memory of former internationals Emlyn Hughes and Keith Weller as he left the pitch.

Eriksson said: "I do not think I need to talk to him any more. I spoke to him in the dressing room and on the plane coming home."

"I have talked to Alex Ferguson about it and I do not feel there will be a problem. Of course it is in the interest of Alex and myself that he goes on growing into the big, big football player that he can be."

"He is in a good football club and it is in the interest of Wayne, Manchester United and England fans that he becomes the best talent that he can."

"I think David Moyes looked after him well at Everton but Ferguson has had huge experience of dealing with young players."

#### Worst

"But when I pick players I have to make sure they behave as they should and I will talk to the clubs if there is a problem that I feel is important."

He added: "It was the worst game I have ever seen my players play against Spain but I do not feel they let me down."

"It was hard for them to keep their focus and they would not play like that in a competitive game."

"I still think we have moved forward and have done well in our World Cup qualification games."

"As long as we keep clear of injury I feel there is every possibility we can go to Germany in 2006 and win the tournament because I think we will have better players than we had in both Japan and Portugal."

**Sou men  
romp it**

■ by GEORGE SCOTT

**NEWCASTLE** cruised into the knockout stages of the UEFA Cup with a glorious 4-0 victory over Sochaux in France.

Goals from Lee Bowyer - his first of the season - Shola Ameobi, Craig Bellamy and a fantastic fourth from a free-kick by Lauren Robert put a huge smile on the face of boss Graeme Souness as the Toon won in France for the first time in their history.

Newcastle knew they were in the knockout stage before kick-off after Sporting Lisbon whipped Dynamo Tbilisi 4-0 in an early kick-off. But, just to show their superiority, the Geordies did the business in style.

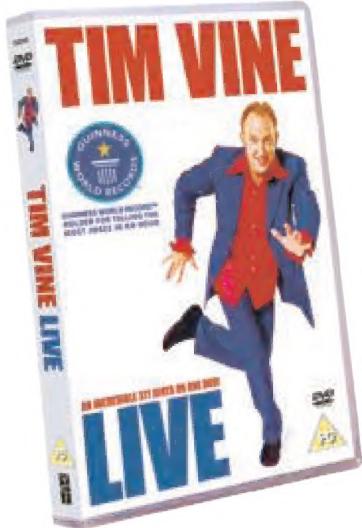
did the business in style.  
But it was a different story for north-east rivals Middlesbrough who went down 2-0 to Spaniards Villarreal

**EEFA Cup special: P76-77**



**TOON RAIDERS:** Craig Bellamy (*left*) and James Milner congratulate hitman Shola Ameobi after he struck Newcastle's second goal last night

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# BECKS IN CRISIS TALKS

■ by DANNY FULLBROOK

**SVEN GORAN ERIKSSON** is planning crisis talks with David Beckham.

The England coach will fly to Madrid before the next Three Lions game against Holland on February 9 for a heart-to-heart with his skipper.

Eriksson insisted yesterday that Becks is not finished as a footballer despite his poor form for England. But the Swede made it clear he is concerned about the 29-year-old and in particular his role at Real Madrid.



**Fierce**

Many critics feel Beckham does not deserve his place in the starting 11 for England, let alone the captaincy.

He came in for fierce criticism from Euro 2004 and then

**BECKS: Concerns**

**Turns to Page 79**

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**Turns to Page 79**

# **England boss plans skipper summit**